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# Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

## I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 21 May to 24 November 2005 and brings up to date the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1604 (2005).

2. UNFICYP continued to be led by my Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Zbigniew Wlosowicz, assisted by the Force Commander, Major-General Hebert Figoli (Uruguay). As at 15 November, the strength of the military component stood at 841 all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 69 (see annex).

## II. Good offices mission

3. During the reporting period, there was no substantial change in the position of the two sides on my mission of good offices. From 16 to 20 May, Kieran Prendergast, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at that time, held a week of preliminary informal discussions in New York with a Greek Cypriot delegation to explore the possibility of resuming negotiations. Subsequently, at my request, between 30 May and 7 June, Mr. Prendergast undertook consultations in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey to seek their respective views on the role of the United Nations in the current circumstances.

4. Mr. Prendergast presented a detailed briefing on his consultations and findings to the Security Council on 22 June (see SC/8422). He also conveyed my view that, mindful of my responsibilities, I remained committed to assisting the parties in achieving a settlement since, as a general proposition, my good offices ought to be available to the parties requesting them. Moreover, the persistence of the status quo on the island was unacceptable, as the Council has made clear on many occasions. At the same time, I felt that launching a new process prematurely would be inadvisable and I hoped that the Council would agree that nothing positive would be achieved by a new effort that would end, as previous efforts had done, in failure or stalemate.

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5. As things stood, I believed that it would be prudent to proceed very carefully and I intended to reflect on the future of my mission of good offices in the period ahead, taking full account of the reaction of the Council to Mr. Prendergast's briefing as well as developments on the ground, and, in particular, any evolution in the position of the parties.

6. Depending on the evolution of the situation and the attitudes on the island, Mr. Prendergast noted in his briefing to the Council that it might become appropriate for me to consider appointing a Special Adviser, on a when-actually-employed basis, who would engage the parties in exploring whether the necessary common ground existed or could be established to enable full-scale negotiations to resume.

7. Within the framework of my good offices, I met with the Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, on 16 September and with the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, on 31 October. Mr. Papadopoulos asked me to continue my good offices mission and to consider holding a new round of talks. He concurred that, for the next round of talks to resume, it must be well prepared. Mr. Talat also urged me to resume negotiations in the shortest time possible. Similar calls were made by Greece and Turkey, a number of other Member States and other interested parties. In addition, Mr. Talat raised the issue of ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots, a matter which had already been addressed in my report of May 2004 (S/2004/437).

## III. Activities of the Force

### A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

8. The military situation along the ceasefire lines remained generally calm and stable. Overall, the opposing forces showed cooperation and exercised restraint. Since the implementation of the new concept of operations of UNFICYP in February 2005, the number of incidents had gradually declined and most were minor in nature. The Force recorded 341 incidents between May and September this year as compared with 440 for the same period in 2004. The number of air violations decreased from 30 in the last reporting period to 25; one by a Turkish military aircraft, one by a Cyprus Police helicopter and the remaining 23 of unknown or civilian origin.

9. There were, however, four incidents of significant concern: an incursion into the buffer zone by Turkish Forces in the Louroujina Pocket involving a threat to the Force Commander and other UNFICYP military personnel; the placement of a series of buoys by Turkish Forces close to the western maritime security line; the entry into the buffer zone and the removal of a Turkish flag from a Turkish Cypriot observation post by a Greek Cypriot civilian; and shots fired at UNFICYP personnel by a Greek Cypriot hunter. For the first time since 2001, the National Guard conducted its "Nikiforos" military exercise, and subsequently, the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot security forces held their "Toros" military exercise on 23 November.

10. The events in Louroujina began in mid-August when Turkish Forces placed construction materials inside the buffer zone. The materials were moved following a protest by UNFICYP, but the Turkish Forces then proceeded to construct a new

checkpoint immediately adjacent to the buffer zone. This violation of the status quo was again protested by UNFICYP. On 31 August, a United Nations patrol encountered a company-size Turkish Forces patrol inside the buffer zone in the same area and asked them to leave. The UNFICYP Force Commander came to the site and, upon his arrival, Turkish soldiers cocked and pointed their weapons at him and other UNFICYP personnel. Ultimately, agreement was reached to freeze all activity in the area until the Force Commander and the Commander of the Turkish Forces could meet. Turkish Forces nevertheless placed a sign inside the buffer zone and proceeded with the construction of the checkpoint. After further negotiation, the Turkish Forces removed the sign and agreed to honour the ceasefire line. However, the checkpoint was not dismantled. The situation in Louroujina remained static until 1 November, when a Greek Cypriot civilian entered the buffer zone and removed a Turkish flag from the same checkpoint. This action was strongly protested by the Turkish Cypriot side, and Greek Cypriot officials immediately disavowed it. The Turkish Forces responded to the incident by instituting regular manning of the checkpoint, which remains in place to date.

11. The placement of buoys by Turkish Forces close to the western maritime security line has not been resolved. UNFICYP requested on several occasions that the buoys be removed and stated that if they were left in place, they would constitute a change to the status quo and a permanent violation. The Turkish Forces asserted that the buoys do not mark the maritime security line but are in place to indicate to maritime vessels that they are approaching disputed waters.

12. On 21 November, several shots were fired at an UNFICYP patrol inside the buffer zone by a Greek Cypriot hunter when he was asked to produce his hunting licence. While the vehicle used by the UNFICYP troops was seriously damaged, the soldiers escaped unharmed. The individual was later arrested by the Cyprus Police and charged with attempted murder.

13. The clearing of mines in the buffer zone continued during the reporting period. On 5 August, UNFICYP secured an agreement to begin the clearing of Turkish Forces minefields in Nicosia and surrounding areas within the buffer zone. Since May, on the whole, 78,132 square metres over nine minefields were cleared, and more than 470 anti-personnel and 430 anti-tank mines were removed and destroyed.

14. The lifting of the restrictions of movement of UNFICYP personnel (see S/2005/353, para. 15) in the north in May 2005 enabled the Force to effectively restore operations in areas previously restricted. Movements of UNFICYP personnel were, however, still limited in areas close to military bases in the north. The United Nations continued to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the maintenance of the status quo in Varosha. In response to reports of improper use of a beach area in Varosha for tourism, the Turkish Forces asserted that the number of authorized visitors had increased but that there had been no change in the status quo. UNFICYP was unable to verify the situation because of the established restrictions on the Force in that area. The Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot security forces remain in violation of the military status quo in Strovilia.

15. Since the introduction by UNFICYP of the military observer and liaison officer teams, both opposing forces have been cooperating constructively with them. Although the concept is still new and has not yet reached its full potential, the experiences of the teams have been largely positive, with improvements in the sharing of information and the speedy resolution of incidents. The introduction of

the teams continues to contribute to an increased emphasis on liaison, observation and mediation rather than the interposition of forces, for which UNFICYP still retains a capability. In addition, the Force has increased the number and duration of its air patrols and has also procured night vision equipment to improve its surveillance of the buffer zone. That method of observing the buffer zone, in conjunction with the new patrolling concept, has increased the monitoring capacity of UNFICYP as compared to observation from static locations.

## B. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

16. UNFICYP continued to promote confidence-building activities involving both sides and in general received cooperation from them. In August, UNFICYP mediated and enabled the opening of the Astromeritis/Bostanci crossing point under temporary arrangements agreed between the two sides. Those arrangements are to remain in place pending the completion of the road construction project within the buffer zone funded by the European Union. In August, the European Union amended the Green Line Regulation to include a provision for three more possible crossing points in Kato Pyrgos — Karavostasi, Kato Pyrgos-Kokkina and Kokkina-Pachyammos.

17. The movement of people and trade across the buffer zone continued with approximately 9 million crossings of Greek Cypriots to the north and Turkish Cypriots to the south since the opening of the crossing points in early 2003. Goods worth about 1 million Cyprus pounds (about $2 million) crossed the Green Line from the north to the south, and 127,000 Cyprus pounds (approximately $250,000) worth of goods crossed from the south to the north during the same period.

18. UNFICYP continued to carry out its mandated humanitarian tasks in support of the 397 Greek Cypriots and 146 Maronites living in the northern part of the island. During the reporting period, UNFICYP police and military components conducted 62 humanitarian convoys, money runs and humanitarian visits to those communities. In September, the Turkish Cypriots agreed to allow the Greek Cypriot secondary school to function in all six grades in Rizokarpaso in the north, and UNFICYP assisted in the delivery of textbooks for the Greek Cypriot primary and secondary schools. UNFICYP also facilitated the appointment of seven teachers at the secondary level and continues to negotiate the appointment of one additional teacher at that level. In addition, the Force assisted in securing a supply of water for the Maronite community living in Kormakitis.

19. UNFICYP supported civilian projects in the buffer zone, in particular farming activities and infrastructure improvements. Over the past six months, the Force has noted an increase in unauthorized civilian construction by Greek Cypriots outside designated civil use areas, primarily in Sector 4.

20. In March, UNFICYP received a written commitment from the Greek Cypriot side that a Turkish elementary school would be established in Limassol for the Turkish Cypriot community, and UNFICYP continues to discuss with the relevant authorities the modalities for implementing that commitment. Meanwhile, the Greek Cypriot side adopted special measures aimed at upgrading the provision of primary education for that community by hiring four Turkish Cypriot teachers to provide instruction in the language, culture and arts and crafts of Turkey. In addition,

UNFICYP assisted Turkish Cypriots in the south in obtaining identity documents, housing, welfare services, medical care, employment and education.

21. Although the opening of the crossing points enabled the movement of people across the buffer zone, the support of UNFICYP and the neutral venue of the Ledra Palace continued to be viewed as essential by both sides for the mediation of sensitive issues. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 52 bi-communal meetings in which about 2,000 people from both sides of the buffer zone participated. Regular monthly meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders continued to be held at the Ledra Palace under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia.

22. In the mixed village of Pyla in the buffer zone, UNFICYP obtained agreement from the village's Turkish and Greek football clubs to play against each other in two exhibition matches. They were the first joint football games since 1968. The matches were held in July and October in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot stadiums, respectively. In October, UNFICYP also arranged the first meeting of the principals of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot primary schools in Pyla to discuss areas for common action.

23. UNFICYP facilitated the observance of a number of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot religious events on both sides of the island over the course of the summer. On 10 and 11 June, the military and police components of the mission assisted 1,000 Greek Cypriots to make a pilgrimage to the Church of Saint Barnabas near Famagusta for the first time in 31 years. On 1 and 2 September, UNFICYP facilitated the visit of over 900 Greek Cypriots to the St. Mamas Church in Morphou and provided assistance to 330 Turkish Cypriots to make a pilgrimage to Kokkina in the western part of Cyprus.

24. By the end of October, the overall staffing of the UNFICYP police had reached its mandated strength of 69, which allowed the police component to introduce shift work, thus providing increased patrolling. By 1 September, UNFICYP police had already taken over the role of the sector civil affairs team from the military component. UNFICYP police also started manning the military post at Leonarisso, which provides assistance to Greek Cypriots living in the Karpas region.

25. With the increase in staffing, the UNFICYP police were able to increase their contacts with both sides. UNFICYP police and civil affairs officers monitored and followed up on approximately 100 cases of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots involved in criminal court proceedings, including traffic violations and accidents, burglary, assault, illegal possession of firearms and drug trafficking on both sides of the buffer zone. In total, 11 Greek Cypriots in the north and seven Turkish Cypriots in the south were arrested during the reporting period. There are no Greek Cypriots currently serving sentences in the north, and 24 Turkish Cypriots are serving sentences in the south. UNFICYP police officers visited Turkish Cypriots detained in the south and Greek Cypriots detained in the north and monitored proceedings and trials. UNFICYP continued to assist in medical evacuations from the north to the south and in transporting the remains of deceased persons. In addition, the number of tasks of the UNFICYP police increased with the opening of the Astromeritis/Bostanci crossing, where they patrol the two km of road running through the buffer zone.

## IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

26. In the course of the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus held 20 meetings leading to progress on a number of issues. On 30 June, the Committee reached an agreement in principle on a common programme of exhumations and identification scheduled to begin during the spring of 2006. Another agreement was reached in September on the establishment in the buffer zone of an anthropological laboratory, where the remains collected on both sides will be stored. Once completed, the laboratory will be staffed by the Inforce Foundation Centre for Forensic Science Technology and Law, an agency based in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On 11 November, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus announced that should the preparations run as expected, the programme of exhumations and identification would begin during the spring of 2006. The project — which should be financed by voluntary contributions in order to meet all costs — is expected to last three or four years. It will be carried out under the aegis of the Committee, while the funds will be administered by the United Nations Development Programme.

27. For the programme of identification by DNA, the Committee will benefit from the cooperation of a department of the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics. It has been agreed that the institute will be reinforced with the participation of two Turkish Cypriot scientists. Furthermore, a Turkish Cypriot laboratory is in the process of being upgraded for the programme of exhumations and identification. In July, the Committee appointed two scientific advisers, a Greek Cypriot scientist and a Turkish Cypriot scientist, to help with the implementation of the programme of identification by DNA of missing persons of both communities.

28. For about six weeks in the summer, the Committee undertook an emergency programme of exhumations in the north, under the supervision of an Inforce forensic expert, with positive results. Expenses have so far been covered by funds provided by Greek Cypriots, Greece and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, on 21 November, the Turkish Government pledged a financial contribution to the work of the Committee.

29. In spite of those positive developments in the implementation of the July 1997 Agreement, the Committee has been unable to begin its investigative work. This is a cause for concern as it is an essential step towards progress in the resolution of the humanitarian question of the missing persons and the fulfilment of the mandate of the Committee as set out almost 25 years ago. In order to allow the Committee to accelerate and conclude its work without further delay, it is my intention to appoint a third member as of January 2006 to be assisted by a full team.

## V. Financial aspects

30. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/284 B of 22 June 2005, appropriated for UNFICYP the amount of $46.5 million gross ($44.1 million net). In this regard, I am grateful for the voluntary contribution of one third of the cost of the Force, equivalent to $14.7 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece. Other countries and organizations might wish to do likewise, in order to lower the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

31. Financial resources approved by the General Assembly for the 2005/06 period provide for the maintenance of the Force at its currently authorized military strength of 860 (all ranks). Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the General Assembly.

32. As at 31 October 2005, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 15 December 2005 amounted to $19.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $2,217 million.

## VI. Observations

33. The situation in Cyprus has remained stable, with calm prevailing along the ceasefire lines. The opening of additional crossing points and small increases in trade between the two sides enhanced the opportunity for people-to-people contact, yet progress towards a political solution has been negligible at best. UNFICYP continued to enjoy generally good cooperation from both sides, but at the same time each side made attempts to alter the status quo to its advantage, whether in the form of new construction or incursions of personnel into the buffer zone.

34. The experience gained during the reporting period indicates that the new force structure of UNFICYP is adequate for the implementation of the mandate and that the reconfiguration of the Force has not led to deterioration in the overall security situation. However, due to delays in achieving the full staffing levels for the UNFICYP civil affairs component and the civilian police, the restructured Force has not reached the full potential of its revised concept of operations. Under the circumstances, and in light of the lack of significant positive developments on the ground, it would be premature to suggest further adjustments to the Force at this stage. I intend to keep the operations of UNFICYP under close scrutiny, with a view to offering recommendations for possible further adjustments as soon as warranted.

35. It is clear that an early completion of the work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and a solution to the issue of missing persons would greatly contribute to reconciliation on the island. I would therefore urge all concerned to redouble their efforts and put aside political considerations in order to close this painful humanitarian chapter and to end the suffering of the relatives of missing persons.

36. I continue to believe that only the achievement of a comprehensive settlement will bring an end to the Cyprus problem. In the absence of such a comprehensive settlement, the presence of UNFICYP on the island continues to be necessary. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 15 June 2006.

37. Again, I do not believe that the time is ripe to appoint a full-time person dedicated to my good offices. While calls have come from all concerned for the resumption of negotiations, it appears that the conditions surrounding such a resumption necessitate further clarifications. In the circumstances, the Chief of Mission will continue to act as my Special Representative on the ground for contacts at the highest level with the two sides and other key actors on the Cyprus question. I may continue, however, to dispatch, on an ad hoc basis, a senior official

from the Secretariat to visit Cyprus, Greece and Turkey to assess the situation on the ground in the light of recent developments.

38. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to Zbigniew Wlosowicz, my Special Representative and Chief of Mission in Cyprus, the Force Commander, Major-General Figoli, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

# Annex

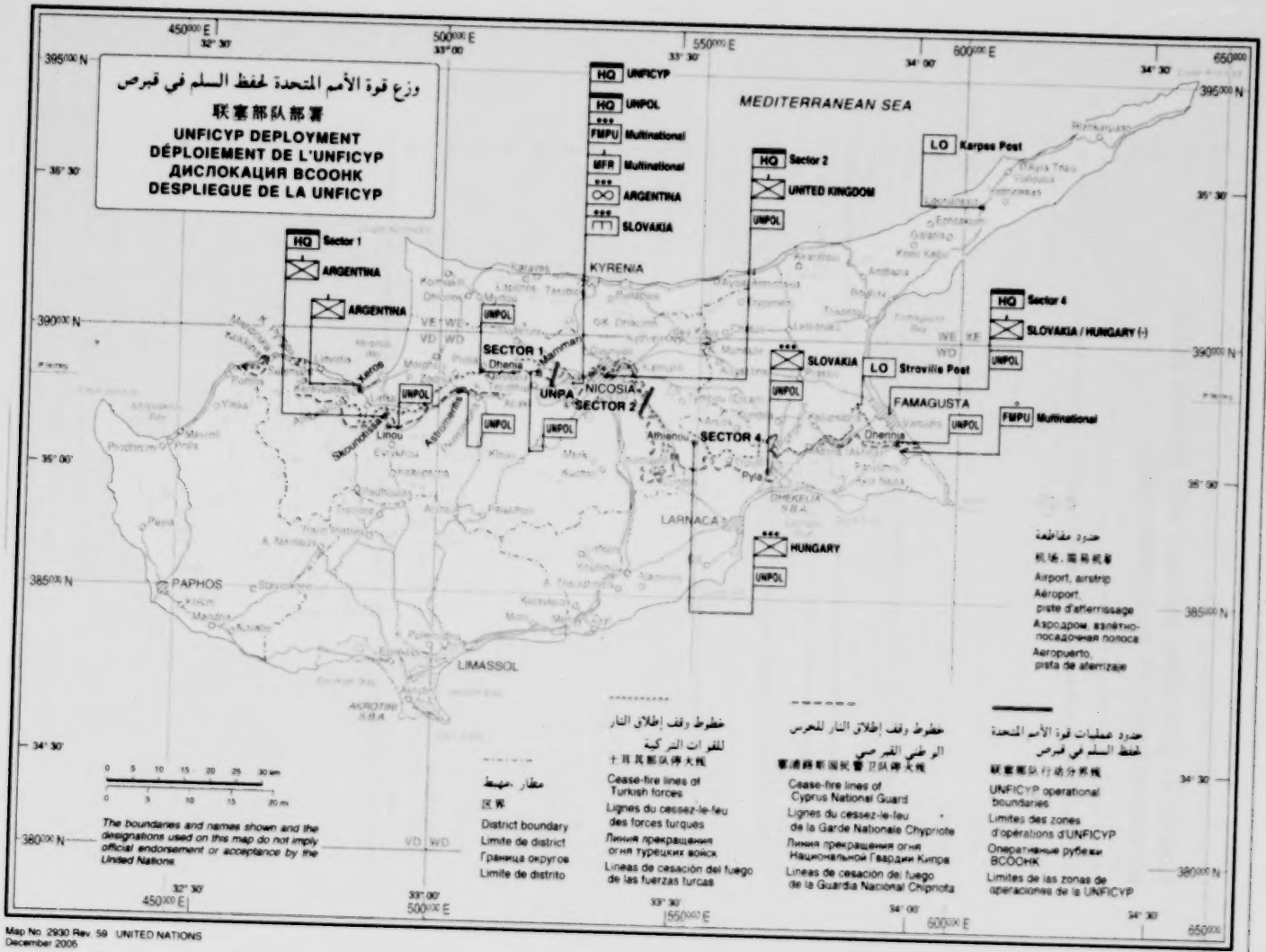
## Countries providing military and civilian police personnel (as at 15 November 2005)

| *Country* | *Military personnel* |
|---|---|
| Argentina[a] | 294 |
| Austria | 4 |
| Canada | 1 |
| Hungary | 82 |
| Slovakia[b] | 198 |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 262 |
| **Total** | **841** |

[a] The Argentinean contingent includes soldiers from Brazil (1), Chile (15), Paraguay (14) and Peru (13).

[b] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Croatia (2).

| | *Civilian police* |
|---|---|
| Argentina | 4 |
| Australia | 15 |
| Bosnia | 4 |
| Croatia | 2 |
| El Salvador | 8 |
| India | 6 |
| Italy | 4 |
| Ireland | 18 |
| Netherlands | 8 |
| **Total** | **69** |

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Cartographic Section